

Name:

Steven Maul

How long have you lived in the L'Anse Creuse Community?

We have lived in the L'Anse Creuse Community for 20 years.

Have you served on any school or district committees? If so, please list committees and your role (chair, co-chair, or participant).

I have not had the pleasure of serving on any school committees as of this time. However, I am active in the community and have served on the Chesterfield Township Water and Sewer Rate Advisory board.

Our charter on this board is to provide fiscal oversight and suggestions for responsible rate increases and spending priorities to the full board of Chesterfield Township. We have been successful in identifying potential waste, lost revenue as well keeping rate increases as low as possible to the taxpayers in the community.

Do you attend Board of Education meetings, if so how often?

I attend Board of Education meetings and Workshops as frequently as allowed by my work and personal schedule. When I am not able to attend in person, I watch the video of the meeting to see the actual discussion. Additionally, I review all Board of Education meeting packages that are posted on the LCPS website prior to each meeting for an understanding of the discussion topics.

Have you served as a volunteer in the community? If so, for what organization?

I served as a Science Olympiad coach for several years when my children were in school. Additionally, my wife and I volunteer our time to support the L'Anse Creuse High School-North swim teams (both boys and girls) with fundraising activities that include merchandise sales, concession stand and help organize and run County wide swim meets.

**Family:**

**Spouse:** My wife, Janet Maul and I celebrated our 28th wedding anniversary in 2016. Janet has held various positions in the L'Anse Creuse district 2010. This year, she is working at Atwood Elementary.

**Children:** Two daughters, Stephanie and Jaimie. Both attended Atwood Elementary, Middle School North and graduated from L'Anse Creuse High School North. **How many in LCPS?** Stephanie graduated from High School North in 2008, and Jaimie graduated from High School North in 2009.

**Career:**

I am a PMP Certified IT Project Manager with over 20 years experience building strong teams, consensus and common goals. I am experienced in setting budgets and timelines with a relentless focus on results and executing to schedule. During my career, I have mentored over dozens of colleagues in order to help them advance to the next level in their career plan. Additionally, I spent 5 years as a teacher of Project Management Principles and Earned Value management Systems as certified instructor recognized by the Project Management Institute.

**Education:**

Bachelor's Degree (B.S) - Business Administration, Wayne State University - 1989

Project Management Professional certification (PMP) awarded by the Project Management Institute (PMI) in 2005. This certification is renewed on a three year cycle by the completion of 20 hours of continuing Professional Development training annually.

**What do you think is the purpose of the L'Anse Creuse Public Schools Board of Education?**

I believe there are four major responsibilities of any school Board of Education. First, the board must always advocate for our students, celebrate success and encourage community participation in the district. Second, the board should help provide the vision for the district based on community values and focusing on students. Third, to help provide the structure for the district, including tools, metrics and process to measure performance. Finally, to evaluate the performance of students, staff, superintendent and hold people accountable for performance. All of these responsibilities share equal importance as they work in concert to create an safe, encouraging and structured environment for our students, staff and community to succeed.

What particular or added dimensions would you bring to the Board if voted in?

There are three dimensions I would bring to the board if voted in. First, I would work hard to help bring back respect for others and listening to their point of view. I have over 25 years of experience building teams and consensus. Second, I would bring a sense of urgency and action to the board table. Talking and planning is necessary, but so is the focus on execution and not becoming paralyzed by analysis. Finally, my work experience has trained me to focus on communication, results and performing to plans.

What do you feel are the three most positive aspects of L'Anse Creuse Public Schools?

Community Values - LCPS has a community comprised of hard working families that value education, achievement and preparing our kids for their future. Having a community that understands the importance and value of education is crucial for any district to perform well.

Dedicated Staff - LCPS has staff filling all roles from teacher to maintenance that are dedicated to providing the best environment to our kids.

High Performing District - LCPS is overall doing a good job educating our children which provides us a strong foundation to move forward.

What do you feel are the three greatest challenges facing L'Anse Creuse Public Schools?

Financial Issues - Like most every district in Michigan, LCPS is facing both long and short term financial pressures. How we respond as a community to these issues is key to the future for our kids. We need to ensure that we have in place an administration that is focused on how we spend EVERY dollar in the district and to ensure that the priority is getting dollars to the classrooms.

Declining Enrollment - This is another issue that is facing almost every district in Michigan and directly tied to Financial Issues above. The demographic data seems to point to a continued shrinking pool of students. Again, how we respond as a community is crucial. We need to stay focused and ensure that we have the correct structures in place to educate and serve our student population. This includes buildings, services, and personnel. The overall cost structure of the district must have the full attention of our administration and must be openly communicated to the district, as it impacts the lives of students, parents and staff.

Transparency and Accountability - Maintaining an open and "safe" line of communication between the administration and board as well as with the community at large needs to be addressed. We need to ensure that the administration is aggressively fostering open communication with the board, staff and community free of ridicule or reprisal.

What is your understanding of how our schools are financed? How could the district maintain a balanced budget?

Public schools are financed through multiple revenue streams from State, Federal and local sources. Michigan provides a foundation allowance to school districts, localities assess "non-homestead" property taxes (18 mills) and there are various Federal grants available. The exact percentages can vary from year to year, but I believe that funding sources are approximately 55% state, 40% local and 5% Federal. To maintain a balanced budget, the district needs to ensure that all waste from discretionary spending is eliminated, as well as ensuring we have the correct number of buildings and staff in place.

**What is your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the overall operations of L'Anse Creuse Public Schools?**

I believe that our people working in the operation of the LCPS is our greatest strength. They are dedicated to the education of our students.

However, my assessment of how the overall operations of the LCPS district is being managed is different. I believe that there are many opportunities to significantly improve.

It is my sense that we do not have open and inclusive leadership in the district starting with the administration. Although anecdotal in nature, I have friends working in the district that frequently share their "horror" stories with me. Even though it's coming from multiple sources in multiple buildings, some common themes emerge. They complain about a general lack of responsiveness from leadership at central administration. On numerous occasions, I've asked district employees why they don't attend BoE meetings and voice their concerns. The constant theme is that most are afraid to speak out in fear of retribution from the district leadership. This is unacceptable. There must be an environment where people can voice concerns or recommendations in a risk-free setting.

**If you win a seat on the Board of Education, what would you seek to accomplish?**

There are several things I would seek to accomplish if elected.

First and most important is to maintain focus on the education of our students with a nurturing environment and solid curriculum. We must also "heal" the relationship between board members as well as with the superintendent and administration. It has become toxic and stops our progress. Next, we need to take an unvarnished assessment of our finances (both long and short term), and make the necessary changes to address our structural imbalances. The administration and board must work together to ensure that we have a sustainable balance between our revenue streams and expenses. Finally, we need to foster and encourage feedback and solutions from our educators and staff by creating a risk free environment without fear of retribution.

**To what extent do you think Board members should be involved in legislative activities?**

I believe it is a good thing for board members to be involved in legislative activities. We need to stay current and plugged in to changes that are happening in both Lansing and in Washington D.C., so that

we will know how to respond. I think that the board should speak with one voice and advocate our positions to leaders in Lansing and ask for help where needed.

**Additional comments:**

I am honored to be on the ballot on November 8<sup>th</sup> and I'm asking for your vote. I take the opportunity to serve the members of our district as a Board of Education Trustee very seriously.

My approach to working with others is quite simple.

I ALWAYS treat others with dignity and respect by listening to their point of view with an open and attentive mind. I believe that we have much more in common than what separates us. I believe that questions should always be encouraged. No question, position or idea is "dumb", and we need to ensure that everyone "at the table" feels empowered and safe to ask questions free of ridicule or retribution. Finally, I believe in the "art of the possible". To me this means a few things. It means that we never place predefined limits on our goals, plans or approaches to solve a problem. It also means that we create an environment that measures, values and enables success.

I believe with all of my heart that these behaviors are the foundation of any meaningful and productive relationship.